



Los Angeles County Commission on Disabilities

Celebrating 31 Years of Leadership & Advocacy

www.laccod.org



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MINUTES OF THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES

The regular meeting of the Los Angeles County Commission on Disabilities was held on Wednesday, February 21, 2007, at Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, Room 381B 500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Neal at 1:20 p.m. Introduction of Commissioners, Staff and audience members followed.

APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 17, 2007 MINUTES

On motion of Commissioner Troost, seconded by Commissioner Krzyzanowski, and duly carried, the minutes for the meeting of January 17, 2007 were approved.

Commissioner Neal commented that she plans to arrange a meeting with Mr. John King, ADA 504 Compliance Officer with the Housing Authority, City of Los Angeles, to further discuss information that was presented on the Housing Authority.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ronee C. Ellis – Informed the committee that she has not been able to attend meetings since last year due to health issues. Ms. Ellis expressed her appreciation of disabled communities in each of the five districts who are attending meetings.

PUBLIC COMMENT (Cont.)

Chin Ho-Lao – introduced himself as the Chair of the Community Outreach of Access Services Committee and reported the following:

- The Committee was invited to speak at the Pasadena Senior Center about Access Services, which provides the paratransit for people with disabilities and seniors with certain disabilities on March 2 at 8:30 a.m. Lunch will be provided, and it is open to the public.
- Events are being held to celebrate the Chinese New Year. The City of Alhambra has celebration activities on Saturday, February 24, 2007, at 11:00 a.m. originating at Valley Blvd. and Garfield Ave. He shared that this is the year of the pig, which brings good fortune and good luck, and wished everyone a healthy and productive year.

Linda Block – shared information about two bills – HR 136 Identity Theft Notification Act and HR 138 Employment Eligibility Verification Anti-Identity Theft Act.

- HR 136 would require the Social Security Administration (SSA) to investigate when W2's with the same social security number and different addresses are received. If the SSA finds evidence of fraudulent activity, it would notify the Department of Homeland Security. With this Bill, individuals could take steps to protect their identity.
- HR 138 would require employers to terminate workers who cannot resolve social security number and name discrepancies. The SSA would be required to notify the Department of Homeland Security, and initiate an investigation.

Ms. Block discussed identity theft caused by "illegal aliens" with Social Security, and gave an example of a woman on a radio show who was a victim of identity theft. Ms. Block shared her concern that others could experience this type of identity theft.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Meeting with Russian Delegation

Chair Neal reported on her meeting with the Russian Delegation. She shared that she provided the delegation with her experience being a person with disabilities serving on a Commission for people with disabilities. She reported that ten people attended the meeting, including a school principal,

a parent of an autistic child who established an agency, the mother of a veteran who established an agency for veterans, doctors (one from a hearing-impaired agency), a lawyer, and two individuals from an agency for the blind. They also discussed China's health care system for the general population and people with disabilities, which they believe is the best because services are centrally located as compared to the United States' system, which is very fragmented.

Meeting with California State Department of Rehabilitation & Department on Disability City of Los Angeles

Chair Neal reported that she met with the California State Department of Rehabilitation & Department on Disability on developing an employment program for people with disabilities. She will keep the commission current as the discussion progresses. Representatives, Regina Houston-Swain and Mr. Mitch Pomerantz, A.D.A. Compliance Officer, were present.

The East Los Angeles Regional Center invited Chair Neal to speak at their meeting. She has received phone calls, since then, from individuals who wanted to connect with advocates. "Outtasight" performed and were well received.

STAFF REPORT

Ms. Sandra Barbee, Division Chief of Commission Services for the Board of Supervisors' Executive office, made the following announcements:

- She introduced the new Staff person, Rosemary Osuna, who has more than 20 years experience with the County of Los Angeles.
- Rosemary Osuna introduced herself and shared that she worked at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center for 23 years in the Patient Relations section where patient complaints are received and resolved, interpreting requests are coordinated and patient satisfaction surveys are conducted.
- Ms. Barbee thanked all the Commissioners who attended the Commissioner Orientation session on February 15th. She informed everyone that the orientation would be held quarterly and encouraged anyone who was not able to attend to come to a future orientation. Date of orientations to follow.
- Los Angeles County Commission for Women will host its 22nd Annual Women of the Year Awards Luncheon on March 12, 2007, at the Millennium Biltmore Hotel in Downtown Los Angeles. If interested,

Commission Services Division can be contacted at (213) 974-1431 for additional information.

**PRESENTATION BY SANDY EISENBERG, TOTAL RECALL
CAPTIONING SERVICES**

Modern Technology and Captioning

Sandy Eisenberg representing "Total Recall" returned to address the Commission on the issue of the captioning service that her company can provide to the "Disability Forum" radio program on KYTM. Ms. Eisenberg confirmed that the radio program could be captioned on the internet. She explained that they are trained as court reporters and use the same skills and technology to provide communication access to people who are deaf and hard of hearing. Captioning can also be used to help some people with cognitive disabilities or people who are more visual learners. She has found that captioning helps those with visual impairments by enlarging the size of the words and those with English as a second language. She shared that one in ten people experience some degree of hearing loss. Ms. Eisenberg advised the Commission that information about her services is on the table including a card which says "Total Recall RSVP." Anyone wishing to receive Ms. Eisenberg's newsletter can fill out the card. She shared that she has a brand new website, www.yourcaptioner.com, beginning this weekend.

**PRESENTATION BY TOM CAVAGNERO, SENIOR TAX SPECIALIST,
INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICES (IRS)**

Overview of the Stakeholder Partnerships Education and Communication (SPEC) & Disability Initiative Programs

Tom Cavagnero – introduced himself as a Senior Tax Specialist with the IRS SPEC Office in Downtown, Los Angeles. He explained that this office is the education and outreach office for the largest division within the IRS -- the wage investment or the 1040 division. This division serves over 125 million taxpayers who receive non-business income such as wages, interest, dividends and pensions. SPEC delivers service to certain segments such as taxpayers with low to moderate income, the elderly, taxpayers with limited English proficiency, and taxpayers with disabilities by reaching out to local government, non-profit, faith-based, educational, financial and corporate organizations to multiply the impact.

SPEC delivers information about the valuable tax credits such as the refundable earned income credit, the child tax credit, the dependent care credit, retirement savers credit, etc., and assists taxpayers with getting those credits through their volunteer income tax assistance. They also help taxpayers create assets and asset-building opportunities through individual development accounts, literacy classes, opening bank accounts, etc.

In 2006, SPEC, partnering organizations and volunteers prepared 2.2 million returns (a 7.4% increase from 2005) and filed 83% electronic returns, which meant speedier refunds. There were 12,362 VITA (free tax preparation sites) sites with 68,000 volunteers -- an 11% increase from 2005.

SPEC wants to reach taxpayers with disabilities. Three years ago, they began working with the National Disability Institute (NDI) to research this and found that one in five Americans has a disability; over 20 million Americans with disabilities between 18 and 64 are employed; and one in three people with disabilities live in households with less than \$15,000 of income.

The NDI and SPEC initiated a tax fax campaign and included several disability-related charitable organizations and other agencies. SPEC decided to use their existing coalitions to start this disability initiative and approach new partners with the focus on people with disabilities.

The initiative began with 12 cities in 2005 and expanded to 30 in 2006. Over 17,000 people with disabilities received free tax preparation services during the 2006 filing season. More than 200 national local disability organizations participated, and over 340,000 outreach contacts were made to people with disabilities in 2006.

For the 2007 filing season, 54 communities are involved. SPEC plans to integrate disability initiatives into every active community coalition with which they are associated. Mr. Cavagnero is the lead on this effort in the L.A. SPEC office which covers Northern L.A. County up to San Luis Obispo County.

There will be "tax days" at the Greater L.A. Agency on Deafness in Eagle Rock on Disability Awareness Tax Days -- March 17 and March 24. Broad

Spectrum partners with CSUN to run several sites, so CSUN can provide student preparers with Broad Spectrum providing technical support. Mr. Cavagnero explained that ten sign language interpreters are needed for these events and asked the Commission and attendees for resources.

Mr. Cavagnero concluded his presentation with statistics supporting how low income groups overlap with disability and by requesting assistance with educational outreach through workshops, seminars and events that involve people with disabilities and through media outreach (Chair Neal invited him on the radio program in March.). He outlined other various ways that everyone could help. Mr. Cavagnero let the Commission know that his business card and informational handouts were available on the table.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Public Relations Committee

Commissioner Krzyzanowski reported that the next Public Relations Committee meeting will be held at 12:15 p.m. prior to the next regular meeting on March 21, 2007. He reminded everyone that the meeting is open to participation to Commissioners as well as the members of the public who want to help the Commission get the word out about its activities in the disabilities' community.

Chair Neal reported that the Commission's website address has been added to the Commission on Disabilities letterhead. She also reported that the radio program is receiving a good response from the public.

Transportation Committee

Gasoline Refueling Alert System

Chair Neal discussed the gasoline refueling alert system, and showed the Commission a prototype of a flashing blue device with the disabled logo which is to be displayed on the driver's side window when arriving at a gas station to refuel. This device will alert the attendant of the driver's need for refueling assistance. The device is not available at this time.

The inventor, Larry Albers, is working on a second device that will be installed in the gas station window, and when lit, will alert customers if someone is available to refuel.

ASI Report

No report – Teddy Remhild was not present.

City of Los Angeles, City Ride Program

No report

MTA Report

No report

LEGISLATION

None

ITEMS NOT POSTED FOR CONSIDERATION ON A FUTURE AGENDA

None

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Krzyzanowski made the following announcements:

- He thanked and congratulated the staff who worked on an article about the Commission and its new website, which was published in this month's County Digest. He let everyone know that there were copies available at the literature table.
- He Informed the Commission of a free training workshop for people with disabilities who want to join the work force called *Interviewing Techniques for Consumers* (flyers on literature table).
- He attended the opening of a new County Hall in East Los Angeles at Supervisor Molina's invitation. Commissioner Krzyzanowski explained that this is a large, unincorporated area, which includes the area east of Boyle heights and City Terrace that had lacked a place for incorporated areas to enjoy with City Hall. This is something that could help us build an infrastructure that could lead to incorporation.
- He reminded the Commission that this is the lunar New Year season which is celebrated by many cultures.

Alexia Teran announced that she also attended the new County Hall event and that she attended another event sponsored by the Department of Public Health some weeks ago at which the County promoted a "clean

hands” program for the schools to encourage children and adults to wash their hands.

Chair Neal thanked Mr. Pomerantz for helping her with the Time Warner Cable Company.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Neal adjourned in memory of Wilson Matt, who passed away after a prolonged illness.

There being no further business, on motion of Commissioner Siegel, seconded by Commissioner Krzyzanowski, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 2:16 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Present

Janet A. Neal, Chair
Richard Krzyzanowski, Vice-Chair
Mary Chambers
Alexia Teran
John Troost
Sheila Wright
Steven Thompson
Bernard Siegel

Excused Absence

Michael Gureckas
Ernest Hamilton
Kecia Weller, Treasurer
Wendy Welt
Harley Rubenstein

Board of Supervisors

Sandra Barbee, Division Chief
Rosemary Osuna, Staff
Martha Arana, Staff

County of Los Angeles

Carlton Lindo, Office of Consumer
Affairs

ASI

Richard Martindale-Essington

Guests

Sandy Eisenberg, Total Recall Captioning Services
Tom Cavagnero, Internal Revenue Service
Ray Louis McKeever, Southern California Association of Deaf/Blind
Magda Carrero, Eastern Los Angeles Regional Center
Roxy Ortiz, Eastern Los Angeles Regional Center
Mitch Pomerantz, American Disabilities Act Compliance Program
Regina Houston-Swang, City of Los Angeles
Linda Block
Ronee C. Ellis
Donna Pomerantz
Maria Villaseñor
Donald Brandon
Marvin White